

RESOLUTION NO. 2006-86

Creation of a Farmland Preservation Commission and Purchase of Development Rights Program

WHEREAS, agriculture is an important economic force in Jefferson County, providing nearly 11,000 jobs or 23 percent of Jefferson County's economic activity, and

WHEREAS, agriculture accounts for \$1.51 billion in economic activity and contributes \$442.6 million in local income to Jefferson County residents and pays \$40.2 million in local property taxes, not including aid to schools, and

WHEREAS, Wisconsin is losing an estimated 24,000 acres of farmland every year, and the pressure to develop Jefferson County farmland is increasing because of our location between the Milwaukee/Waukesha metropolitan and Dane County metropolitan areas, and

WHEREAS, the Jefferson County Board authorized the creation of a Land Preservation Work Group, charged with identifying ways to preserve farmland in our county, which is a goal identified in the County's current Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Plan, and

WHEREAS, the Land Preservation Work Group reported its findings to the County Board in February, received feedback from County Board Supervisors, citizens and local agricultural organizations, and has identified strong support by landowners and farmers to preserve agricultural land, and

WHEREAS, there are Jefferson County landowners who could receive new federal tax benefits from donating easements restricting future use of their land to agriculture if a more visible local process was available,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Jefferson County create a voluntary Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program to preserve farmland and support viable farm operations, protect our County's natural land and water resources, maintain Jefferson County's agricultural heritage and rural quality of life, and to fulfill the goals set forth by the County Board in its 1999 Agricultural Preservation and Land Use Plan, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this PDR Program will be developed and subsequently overseen by a seven member Farmland Preservation Commission composed of five county supervisors and two citizen members, serving staggered three-year terms and appointed by the County Board Chairman, and meeting monthly, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the Commission will be staffed by the County Zoning and Planning Department with staff support from other departments such as Land and Water Conservation, Land Information, and the County Administrator, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Commission will develop the PDR program with the assistance of the Jefferson County Economic Development Consortium, University of Wisconsin Extension, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, other key organizations and stakeholders and base the program on existing PDR programs found to be functional and effective in such places as the Dane County Town of Dunn, the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and elsewhere.

Fiscal note: The 2007 County Board budget provides \$20,000 for land preservation, which can be used to fund the development of the PDR program and the work of the Commission.

Unless some other mechanism is ultimately approved by the County Board when adopting the PDR plan, approval of funding mechanisms and purchases of land will be determined by the County Board.

AYES __21__

NOES __6__ (Imrie, Kannard, Torres, Reese,
Kuhlman, Wiedenhoeft)

ABSENT __2__

ABSTAIN ____

VACANT __1__

Requested by
Land Preservation Workgroup

03-13-07

Sharon L. Schmeling: 03-05-07